

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Henderson, Clifford & Marian

Interviewed by

Patricia Young

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INTERVIEWEE: CLIFFORD & MARIAN HENDERSON

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

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TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

PY: This is an interview with Clifford and Marian Henderson for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project by Patricia Young on March 5, 1981 at three-thirty in the afternoon at their home on Pinyon in Palm Desert.

Okay. So, let's start by talking about more into your impressions of Palm Desert when you first were brought here. Actually where you met and how you happened to first come out here. So go ahead. How you first came out here.

MH: To play tennis with Jimmy and John Makoneddy. But I had been here much earlier, in much earlier days, when all there was here, I knew Cliff, of course, from when was it, in 1937.

CH: From Pan Pacific Auditorium, I guess.

MH: Yes, and the National Air Races.

CH: Yes.

MH: I was invited back to be the guest of honor at the National Air Races. I was in motion pictures at that time.

CH: That was in Cleveland, Ohio, yes.

MH: So I had come down here to visit. And all there was was one tennis court at that time. And a big wall on there had the, the pool was in, and that island, that lovely island with those colorful little boats on them.

CH: There was a little lake.

MH: Yes, at the Shadow Mountain. And so we did play some tennis even then. Then many years went by, and I came down with Jerry and John Makoneddy, as I mentioned before. And Cliff was the fourth in tennis. And we seemed to just meet frequently from there on. It was practically every weekend for during the time when the weather was so lovely. And I usually stayed with the Makonedys, which is just across the way from this house. So we used to wave back and forth to Cliff, and no one was around here. There were hardly any homes.

CH: You can bet she was properly chaperoned. (laughter)

MH: After all, practically an old maid.

CH: She was. Marian was quite emphatic on having everyone

know that.

MH: (laughter) Well, so then a few years went by and we found out we enjoyed sports so very much and football games and so on. And then the Olympic games were coming in Rome. And so that was when we made up our minds why it would be a wonderful thing to get married and go to the games. And that's exactly what we did.

CH: Yes.

MH: Just as simple as that. And we had a great time. We met a lot of famous people there in Rome. Bob Mathius, of course, was a two-time decathlon champion. A very close friend of Cliff's from the time he was about seventeen.

CH: Yes, we were very intimate friends with Bob Mathius who was, he's one of the all time American athletes who's, I guess, you know, he was just great.

MH: He's now in charge of the Olympics, the development of the young people for the Olympics in Colorado Springs. He's quite a large facility there. And we visited him a couple of years ago, I think.

CH: Yes.

MH: So the things that took place at Shadow Mountain were great fun. Every weekend was a big weekend. The people

who belonged to the club, I think of Natalie Hale almost immediately as one of the girls who used to decorate. The club was always beautifully decorated. And anything Cliff talked about, why they would just, everyone would sort of throw themselves into the fun of it. And the costumes almost every weekend. There would be a special costume party and great excitement. Easter you had the Easter parade for the children. And even the animals used to take part in it. Whatever they had, they dressed them up and bring them. And they'd be in the parade.

CH: Maybe we should identify what was that all about. That was just in, it was developed in this new subdivision twelve miles from Palm Springs. It was going to be, hoped to be a new town. And that's why this continuous, and it was all, with it was built beautiful big club, the Shadow Mountain Club. And in order to have activities, we had something going on there every weekend. If it wasn't a tennis tournament, it was this or that or something else. But it gave a reason for people coming back again and again and bringing their friends. And the Shadow Mountain Club was the big come on that brought people. And again they began to buy some lots and built

some homes. Shadow Mountain Club was the, kind of the, acorn from which the whole community grew, developed.

PY: Were most of the people then coming from Los Angeles area or somewhere else.

CH: Yes, that's true.

MH: And from other places. Well, Bill Laire, remember. Cliff brought a lot of famous people there. Every weekend there would be somebody famous at Shadow Mountain. And that's how Bill Laire came down, and Moyer and the girls.

CH: Well, I was very active in the aviation in a national way at that time. And, of course, a lot of these pilots, they had some time and had an airplane to go where they wanted to. So we were forever having famous, well, not Lindbergh's, but still big names in aviation every weekend. And, of course, they found tennis and they found big fun here. It was wholesome social activity. And with it, attractions, you know, just nice people. They liked to be out there meeting and playing tennis and just socializing with a lot of other famous people at least in aviation.

MH: I think you probably saw the picture in the galleria of Jimmy Doolittle and the Tokyo Raiders. Of course, they

came down and spent some time.

CH: We had them as guests one weekend. And, of course, the Tokyo Raiders was, you know, that was the big, it was a big epoch in aviation history. And to actually do that Tokyo raid. I happened to have gone to high school with Jimmy Doolittle, especially back in Los Angeles. And Jimmy and I retained that friendship many, many years and it still exists today. In fact, his wife was Well Joes, he married his high school sweetheart.

MH: I remember one time of all the people from, that we knew at the Los Angeles Tennis Club there, remember, old Perry Jones and Dodie Bundy, May Sutton Bundy, her mother; they were here frequently. And Dodie's husband was a Western Airlines pilot. His name was Chaney.

CH: Oh, yes.

MH: We haven't seen them in quite awhile. But a lot of those people were drawn here. And, of course, Dinah Shore used to come over and play tennis. She used to play a lot of tennis in those days. And Pancho Gonzales and Donald Bunch and Gene Macco. Gene Macco, as a matter of fact, put in your courts, your first two courts, didn't he?

CH: He did, yes.

MH: Because I remember remarking on, I'd known him since he was about fifteen years old, when he was first starting out and becoming a name in tennis. And then later he, well, I believe he sold Bill's tennis courts and became very successful. Of course, Edgar Bergen, we used to see quite a bit of him. And a lot of the people in aviation came to the desert through knowing Cliff. They would just simply come to visit and see what he was talking about. And the next thing you know, they'd buy a place here.

CH: They knew they'd see some of their friends, you know. They wouldn't get, they'd always bump into quite a, here's so and so, and it was a nice place for that aviation group to kind of meet and have some vacationing.

MH: Well, Dutch Kindleberger was here once.

CH: Yes.

MH: I remember his wife said that everybody thought Cliff was out of his mind to come all the way down here in this sandy place. And he'd stop you along the road coming down to the desert or else going up or wherever and spread these maps out on top of the car and show them what he was going to do down there at the desert. And they'd think, oh, poor Cliff. He's really going to be

in trouble. He's going to lose everything he's ever made, going clear down there. Because in those days it took five hours to drive here. And you'd get to Palm Springs and no one wanted to come the rest of the way.

CH: This was about twelve miles further down the road from Palm Springs.

MH: And it was a tedious drive.

CH: There wasn't any boulevard.

MH: No. You had to go through every little town to get here. Now it's nothing on the freeway. You can do it in two hours, two and a half hours if you don't hurry.

PY: So it was really personal friendship with you that brought a lot of the original people here.

CH: Yes.

MH: No question about that.

CH: Rather not have the Pan Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles. It was the only big building of big public events whether it was tennis or high shows or whatever the event might be.

MH: Or Stupowski.

CH: Yes, we had, well, we had . . .

MH: Had some of the first symphonies there.

CH: Although it was to keep the building busy, you know.

It involved a big investment, a lot of taxes, and a big overhead. So we want everything close. My shows . . .

MH: Oh, the Shipsteads, they moved out here. Eddie . . .

CH: And Roy Shipstead.

MH: Shipstead, yes, because Cliff kept telling them what he was doing down here at the desert. So then they finally came down and took a look. And the next thing you know, they live here.

CH: They were on tour nationally, one of the greatest ice skating group. And so they came down here. Of course, they had, their most successful engagement was the Pan Pacific Auditorium which my brother and I had. And so we got them down here and they get quite excited about this place.

PY: Were people as excited about just the, about the tennis, in particular, or did the whole setting appeal to people?

MH: Well, I think it appealed, the whole thing appealed to people.

CH: It wasn't merely tennis. It was . . .

MH: It was so beautiful, so lovely in the open spaces. It was really something.

CH: You know, a dry, wonderful, healthful climate. Lots to

talk about, you know, to get away from the dampness, seashore and get some dry climate.

MH: Well, when you think of leaving Los Angeles and all the hustle and bustle and come down here and be very peaceful and slower pace and beautiful places to walk. We'd go out and leave your doors wide open. And there was never any problems.

CH: Okay.

MH: Come here, little Jeannie.

CH: (laughter)

MH: She made it. He insists on saying hello to you, Pat.

PY: That's all right.

MH: I think that one of the things that was fun and still to this day people who haven't seen Cliff in ages and come and ask, where's Dacca? Dacca was his most beautiful great dane. He was light colored.

CH: Almost a blond.

MH: Majestic.

CH: Gorgeous.

MH: Beautiful.

CH: A gorgeous dog.

MH: So he really was the mascot of Palm Desert. And everywhere, you always knew where Cliff was because Dacca was

always there. But it was between the house and Firecliff and Shadow Mountain. And if Dacca, all they had to do to find Cliff was to look for this great big dog. And that's where Cliff would be. (chuckle) He was just a beautiful thing.

CH: Dacca is long since gone now.

MH: He had what we called the milk run. He used to go to the club and get something from the chef over there. Then he'd go down to Firecliff (laughter) have something there. And the cute thing was that he'd always pick it up. Remember? He'd always pick it up and he'd bring it up here on the front lawn. That was his eating place. So he wouldn't stay down there to eat it.

CH: He'd always get a handout from Shadow Mountain Club kitchen and from Firecliff.

MH: (laughter)

CH: Never went hungry. Katie, I'll bet you're being a nuisance.

MH: You're making your own noise. Yes, you are.

CH: Katie, come here.

MH: Come here to me, fellow.

PY: So you originally had this house then. You built this house.

CH: Yes. It's been enlarged a couple of times. (chuckle)

MH: Yes. Before I moved in, it had been enlarged a couple of times. And then since we've been here, it's been enlarged two or three times.

CH: Well, the original house was there. This was the first enlargement. Original house stopped there.

MH: It was really just a little tiny bungalow with a front room and a bedroom on this side, one on this side, and a kitchen.

CH: Two bedrooms each other end.

MH: So then the other room was where Abbie . . .

CH: You're a nuisance.

MH: (laughter)

CH: Old Katie boy.

MH: He's been with us eight years now, this little fellow. And he's traveled across the country seven times, and he's been on seven ferry boats. He's been on a dozen airplanes. You're not behaving.

PY: Now your brother-in-law, Tommy Thompson?

CH: Yes.

PY: Did he also design many of the homes that were built?

CH: Of course, he designed the land planning and all that, subdivisions.

MH: He was in landscaping, not in house . . .

CH: He wasn't an architect of buildings.

MH: No, not an architect.

PY: I see.

CH: He was a land planning engineer. No, he did all the land planning for the whole project including several additions. He was quite successful and well known.

MH: He was known as really sort of the dean of landscaping before it came, became . . .

CH: You know, you just hire a gardener.

MH: Yes.

CH: And buy some

MH: Sort of the first landscaper . . .

CH: Made it a profession. Bring in a professional land plan and plan your whole garden or whatever you wanted to landscape. It became actually a legitimate profession.

PY: Who was then the architect for Shadow Mountain and Firecliff?

CH: Think fast.

MH: The actual architect?

PY: Was that Walter White?

MH: Goodness, I don't remember. I know Cliff had a lot of different sketches and so forth. And having built the

Pan Pacific Auditorium and . . .

CH: Walter Wood went in in with us at that time.

MH: I don't remember, darling.

CH: Walt and Beckett and Walter Wood, they were in part of that planning. They designed the Pan Pacific Auditorium, you know.

MH: But he had several . . . They won a contest and Cliff chose them to do the Pan Pacific at that time. They may have been. I couldn't tell you. You'd have to look on some bill.

CH: I think they did the first houses here, yes. I'm sure they did.

PY: Did they have a certain concept on how to do it. I know I've been interviewing the woman who was married to the man who started Smoketree Ranch. And she was saying that the architects that were involved with that certainly had a (dog barked) a certain feeling about what desert homes should look like.

CH: Yes.

PY: And that that often seems to be the case. Was there any feeling . . .

CH: And they adhered to that very closely. They were very, almost, tough on the matter if somebody wanted to build.

At Smoketree they had to have their plans approved. In fact, they ^{didn't} usually want to hire this fellow because his ^{style} was quite foreign to the city architecture.

PY: So were there certain restrictions for this subdivision as well?

CH: Well, we had a minimum square footage. We didn't want any shacks or the bungalows. I mean we definitely had these restrictions.

MH: There's the . . .

CH: I have some copies of those.

MH: Palm Desert Property Owners Association. I don't know if you've ever had a copy of those and read them, but those were a combination of several ideas Cliff had. And so as to have everything upgraded rather than a different type of ideas. So one of the main things ^{had} Cliff had in mind and discussed it so many times, and a little bit of it has been disappointing in the development in the valley. It was to keep everything low so that the mountains were important, and that people would have the view of the mountains and wouldn't lose that because that's what the great beauty is that's here.

CH: Someone subdivided what's called Cathedral City. That

was the name they gave it. And know they could build it, buildings with a lot of junk, anything. There was no control over anything. You'd buy a lot and you could just build what you damn pleased. That's what it added up to. And we determined to stay away from that program.

MH: But getting back to Shadow Mountain, I think that the fun of the club, it really brought the families here which was really the feeling that Cliff had was that this would be a family community. And a nice place for children to grow up. And he used to mention that many, many times. The swimming pool was open to all the children throughout the valley, and they used to flock there. You can imagine (chuckle) any chance they had.

CH: Oh, the Shadow Mountain Club and that big figure eight swimming pool. That was way ahead of its time actually for the valley. That was the thing that really gave the town some prestige, having some quality.

MH: Remember the beautiful platform diving board which was olympic size. So a lot of the olympic . . .

CH: Used to come here and practice.

MH: Young people used to come down here for that.

CH: On three levels.

MH: At that time there was one in Los Angeles at the coliseum.

CH: Yes.

MH: And this one.

CH: Some came in here later and they took that all down.

MH: Yes.

CH: And, oh, they just raised the devil.

MH: And they had two beautiful slides. I actually went down on it one time when no one was looking because it was (laughter) so enticing. It was quite steep, and it was a most marvelous plunge into that big pool. But later when Cliff turned the whole thing over to the club people who had, well, what am I trying to say, the membership. Then they in turn eventually sold it to an individual, and that was when they took down this wonderful platform diving board and all. And the slides.

CH: And his lawyers *told him* that. We thought we would get some lawsuits for that thing, so he took it down.

MH: But that was so beautiful, and so different. Now I notice that a lot of people have them in different places we've been.

CH: Yes.

MH: Traveling. They have slides. Nothing quite like he had, but they do have them. And the platform diving also.

PY: Where did the idea come from for this?

CH: I don't know. I guess I'd seen some slides and dives at some amusement parks. I've always been idea hunting all my life. It's where you pick these things up, but you like an idea. You make a note of that, at least a mental note, and remember it. See, I travel a lot and I was very observing and having in mind, I'm going to try and do some building and developing of my own some time. I was hunting for ideas that seemed to make sense, seemed to be successful.

MH: Well, I was sorry. It seemed such a shame to fill in the lake. That was so attractive. Now everybody is putting in a lake around the desert. Cliff was way ahead of his time because that's what was there first of all was the pool and the lake and a tennis court and this huge club.

CH: Well, some committee, one or two of *the committees* said, well, we will probably get some lawsuits over this lake, so they filled it up.

MH: Well, I think they wanted to build on it, too, didn't they?

CH: I don't

MH: They filled it in and the built all around it. But the

other things that took place at the club that were such fun were, well, Easter sunrise service. For years that was the place to come. There would be hundreds of people.

CH: We had a tremendous Easter sunrise activities, ceremony and all. Well, all the seasons, Thanksgiving, Christmas, we made a big to do out of all the normal, I mean, and you can say Thanksgiving and Christmas season, New Year's. Those were all occasions for a very attractive bulletin. We had, some had an old catalogue with all those bulletins.

MH: Have you ever seen those?

PY: Sun spots.

MH: Yes, the Sun spots. You've seen those. I think Evelyn got some for you.

PY: Well, it seems to me you had some other good ideas, too, that were unusual and mysterious, such as having a street such as El Paseo.

CH: Yes. Well, I wanted, you know, a smart avenue that was, I don't know where I picked up. Again, I had a number of trips to Europe. I was forever idea hunting and, you know, I'm going to put that in the back of my head and I'm going to use that idea somewhere along the line. That was, you either have that, that's your nature, if that's your attitude, that you're going to plan to do some development. Then you have to have something. You

just can't, so you've got to have the backlog of a lot of ideas, options.

MH: That's one thing to think about and another thing to do it, isn't it? (chuckle) I know Jerry Malone, you've talked with Jerry, I imagine, haven't you? Jerry Malone used to tell me, he said, that Cliff, just nothing used to phase him. He said, if somebody didn't get out there and people were coming to see the places, so he'd get out there with a broom and a hose and be cleaning up the whole town. (laughter) Right along El Paseo, you know. And there were very few places there at the time. There was end of town, I recall, where we used to go, and there was a little dime store there.

CH: Yes.

MH: I think it's where the San Diego Savings and Loan is now, on that corner. There were about, it was shaped like a horseshoe. I remember we were in there frequently. There weren't any other places to shop. Yardage and everything else.

CH: I think I mentioned before we took advantage of things like holidays. Every Thanksgiving, all of the holidays and we manufactured some between. We took events to have some activity at the club. Something we didn't want to miss. Some old books. Some of those, but we sent out

invitations, you know, you just couldn't, you didn't want to miss this weekend. It keeps them coming.

MH: Ward used to have a rodeo, too.

CH: Oh, yes, that was . . .

MH: That was a lot . . .

CH: That was in the spring.

MH: Yes.

PY: And the Gay Nineties Parade, where did that idea come from?

CH: Well.

MH: Just one of those things.

CH: Two or three old cars, and I had one of my own. I still have it. In fact, 1908 Buick, is in one end of my house here.

MH: *In the gallery* Well, there were always, remember you've

CH: had, the Antiquers have been here also. And that was the cutest thing to see those little old cars going up Highway 74. Cliff has some wonderful pictures of it. You've seen the film, haven't you, of Palm Desert?

PY: No, I haven't.

MH: Oh, you haven't. You should see that, Pat, because talking of El Paseo and asked about El Paseo, there were signs all along the way. Here would be the Fifth Avenue

of the desert. And this would be a drugstore. This would be the most beautiful shopping.

CH: Just some signs, you know. All of these vacant lots. The whole street was vacant.

MH: It's sort of fun to look back on it, and then drive along El Paseo and see all of this that has happened. You know, some time you must get a full picture of, it would be fun to show that and then show what it looks like today.

CH: That's an idea.

MH: Yes, it would be . . .

CH: It's a good idea.

MH: Rather nice. Go along in the car and take a picture.

PY: You were saying the film of Palm Desert has some footage of El Paseo as it was with these vacant lots?

MH: Yes, nothing there! There's nothing there but the trees down the center.

CH: Just the sign, you know. Here's your drugstore and this and that, hardware store.

PY: I assume then that the idea for the palm trees along the street came from your brother-in-law.

CH: Yes. I located those and got a big bargain on those someplace.

MH: Del Amo Nursery.

CH: Yes. They had, somebody had, he had to, he had to sell them for some reason. I got them, I think, about a dollar or two dollars apiece.

MH: I remember those pictures, all the men, everybody, was out there. You and Tommy and everybody else helping with these fellows lifting them off the trucks. They didn't have a crane to lift them by hand.

CH: We had to do the moving. We got our own gang. Every weekend we was moving some palm trees.

MH: They pulled them with ropes to set them up, to stand them up. That's the way they used to do, the hard way. Now they come along with great big cranes and pick it up and put it in the hole.

PY: Sometimes it doesn't quite look the same. I understand the time you get finished with those cranes. It's true. So it required quite a bit of real physical labor on your part to put this all together.

CH: Yes. I've been a fairly good athlete in high school and college. And I enjoyed taking part in the physical labor, using a pick and shovel. I wasn't just trying to tell others to do it. I was in, working as hard as any of them. Said you can behave yourself now, Janey boy.

PY: He wanted to come up.

CH: Okay, little guy. He's my boy. He's my good boy.

MH: You think of so many things that took place. Of course, Cliff many times was called the discoverer of Art and Dottie Todd. They were playing somewhere in Santa Monica.

CH: A little old spot in Santa Monica.

MH: He went in there and saw them and thought they were just wonderful and brought them to the desert. And they spent nine seasons here, I believe it was. Then went on to bigger things.

CH: Well, they cut two or three records which were successful, sale of their records.

MH: Yes. Every time they cut a record, they sent it to Cliff, right up until, they're more or less semi-retired now. I think about seven or eight years ago, but they were very famous in Las Vegas, the top of the Dunes bill. I think they were there six or seven years, weren't they?

CH: They had big success. They always had a different bass. She played the piano and he played guitar and banjo and then they sang. They were very, very good musicians.

MH: So, of course, they were here when, remember, were you here the evening when they had all those honors for Cliff? And they had the bust dedicated the next day.

I don't know how we ever kept that a secret, but we did. (laughter)

PY: That was wonderful.

MH: He was so surprised. We had it covered up and he I guess Jean, my sister, was here and I wonder what they have out there? And she said, oh, I think it's some sort of a water fountain or something. (laughter) We didn't know what to say, you know. But it was a total surprise.

CH: Hello, Sadie boy. He's a good little boy.

MH: But Art and Dottie came from, they were on their way to Honolulu and they changed everything so they could be here for that date because, you know, it had all sort of happened spontaneously. And little by little, well, we should have Art and Dottie Todd, and we should have this one and that one.

CH: The oldtimers turned out.

MH: Fred Waring, of course, came and Edgar Bergen was going to come, too, because those were his two old buddies, but Edgar Bergen wasn't well. He telephoned me and said it was just breaking his heart that he couldn't be here. And then he telephoned and he sent a wonderful telegram. And it wasn't just a few months later that he was in Las

Vegas and died. We were speaking about that today at this luncheon.

CH: Yes.

MH: He should never have gone back to work so soon, but he was a charming, wonderful man.

PY: What was the season for the Shadow Mountain Club?

CH: The season?

PY: In other words, when was it opened usually?

CH: About Thanksgiving time, late November, and it would go into, I'd say, about mid-April. Maybe nearer up to May 1st, maybe.

MH: We used to have those luaus, was as late as May, wasn't it?

CH: Yes. That was the big end of the season, was the big luau.

MH: Oh, the most fabulous luaus. They must have over seven hundred people would, or even more, was it twelve hundred several years?

CH: Several hundred.

MH: That would be there, and all around the swimming pool. It was really beautiful. They had those huge ornamental ice fawns, great big fish and turkey and all kinds of things. It was really fabulous.

PY: And would the pool then stay open during the summer
or would it close?

CH: The pool? Oh, no, the pool was always kept open all
summer.

MH: That was for the children. They had to have it. There
wasn't anywhere else for them at that time.

CH: No, a lot of them kind of sneaked out from, the teenagers
and all sneaked out from Indio because there was no pool
like that. There might have been a couple of swimming
pools of some kind in Indio, but Shadow Mountain was
the place to, they'd come out at five o'clock, any hour
they could get out here and get in the big Shadow Mountain
pool. That was . . .

MH: I wish I had the names of all the people who are now
well in their thirties and forties and even fifties,
for that matter, who said they swam there, learned to
swim the first time.

CH: Oh, Yadie boy. What a guy. What a guy.

MH: Because they had the wonderful girl, Betty Crocker.

CH: Yes.

MH: Wasn't that her name? Betty and, have you talked to
Betty?

PY: No, I haven't.

MH: She's a marvelous girl. And she was like the Pied Piper

with these children. She had them so busy and teaching them to swim. She'd teach them dancing, and she also knew, during the springtime when the wind would blow and the birds would fall out of the trees, she had all these children signed up to come after school to feed the birds. And she had, it was almost like a, well, it was a little bird hospital. And the children took it all so seriously. It was the only way really to save the lives of these little birds. And she'd have them all lined up and you're here for one hour and you take care of it. And you're here from such and such an hour. And they'd even come during the night. The parents had to bring them. It became a very serious thing. (chuckle) Because she was up half the night feeding them. You'd have about twenty or thirty or more, these little birds that had to be fed every three or four hours. They couldn't let them go longer than that. She was really a wonderful person. And she used to put on all kinds of shows and the children would be dressed up. In grownups clothes and put on all these different acts. And that was part of the entertainment on weekends many times. Of course, there were several very nice shops there, too. Earlene, I believe, was the first, had a lovely shop

there. Earlene was full of ideas. She used to put on some exciting fashion shows. And then many times I remember those pictures of all those beautiful girls going down the slides in their new bathing suits. They'd have a fashion show and show off their bathing suits. And then climb up on the slide and the climax was all of them going down into the pool. (laughter) It was quite a finale.

PY: What was the draw of Firecliff? Firecliff Lodge, now it certainly had a different function. What was its draw?

CH: It was the first nice lodge; it had eight bungalows and a dining room, lobby. Leonard Firestone was my partner. The name is a combination of Firestone and Cliff Henderson. That's the kind word of Firecliff. It was quite successful for many years.

MH: It was quite a honeymoon spot. It was a very lovely attractive homey type of place.

CH: What was the couple's management? They were very good.

MH: The Olsons. Don Olson. Oh, are you thinking before that, going back to Mrs. Lawrence?

CH: Yes.

MH: Wilma Lawrence.

CH: Wilma Lawrence, that's right. Very good dining and good food. She really knew her foods.

MH: And Tony used to make the most, the chef would make the most delicious pie. No one makes a mince pie or pumpkin pie like Tony.

PY: So did people come to it mainly as a restaurant or did they come . . .

CH: A lot of them just came to, restaurant was very successful as a restaurant independent of the rooms. There was eight bungalows with three rooms per bungalow. They could have three tenants or one couple or whatever you could get. You could get the whole bungalow or get just one room of the three.

MH: And they had fireplaces in some of them. So they were really very homey.

CH: Two ends one had the fireplaces.

MH: Yes. And the whole thing was so pretty. There was bougainvillea growing over the roof of them. And that was so lovely. It was just picturesque and comfortable and there was a lot to do around the pool. And there was Ping-Pong and horseshoes and just a great place to relax. I think more people used to mention that. You could just come there and just completely relax and enjoy

yourself and there's no

CH: What was this, slide with the stick

MH: Shuffleboard.

CH: Shuffleboard. There were two shuffleboard courts.

MH: Yes.

CH: (dog barking) Yadie boy!

MH: He's barking at the gardener. (laughter) He had to command everything here.

PY: Did you build that as a means of getting people to come to the area and see the subdivision?

CH: Yes. It was one of the first things in the town. It was, you know, we were twelve miles from Palm Springs. It was the idea of having someplace to come and stay a night or two or three nights or maybe a month.

MH: Of course, then there was the Sun Lodge.

CH: Yes.

MH: Right adjoining and, why many people had Sun Lodges. A lot of famous people and business people like Major McKinley had a place there.

CH: Some liked it around the Shadow Mountain Club and they were owned or leased.

MH: And didn't the Shipsteads stay there, too? I believe.

CH: Yes, Eddie Shipstead did. Yes.

PY: Oh, at that point they were not condominiums, they were rooms.

MH: They were, I don't know how it was, really. Rentals, I believe, short-term rentals.

CH: Rentals.

MH: In the beginning. Later they became condominiums. That name was unknown. That's really new.

CH: Oh, Yadie boy.

PY: That's true.

MH: Yes.

PY: Now what about Shadow Cliff Colonies? That they've torn some of it down. What was that?

MH: Well, they took out two bungalows, I believe there to have the development that is there now. The Barclay Bank and all of that's gone in on that corner, shops. The Firecliff, oh, that Shadow Cliff with those, they were very luxurious apartments.

PY: Was that your doing, the Shadow Cliff Colony there?

MH: Oh, yes. I did the decorating for those, the interior decorating. A lot of them, I'm amazed that what we did there originally is still there.

CH: Yes.

MH: Most of them haven't been changed in all these years.

PY: When were they built?

MH: They were built in the sixties.

CH: I guess so.

MH: Yes. And Cliff used to use, keep two or three of them for his own use for friends visiting. And we lived in one of them for awhile while this house was being enlarged again for about the third or fourth or fifth time.

CH: Originally the house stopped at this post there. Then this was added.

MH: This was added. This room was added. The bedroom was enlarged.

CH: Yes, added two different times. We had it, made an addition.

MH: I think a house is more interesting when you do that. I really do. I've enjoyed it. Once or twice Cliff has said, oh, we probably should build another home and start from scratch *and so* but I've enjoyed this so much. The location is just perfect. Very quiet here. The garden is lovely.

PY: That's true. Now how big are the lots here, did you say?

MH: What?

PY: How big are the lots, did you say?

CH: All a hundred and fifty foot frontage. We had no small lots in Palm Desert. I hated the, you know, fifty, sixty foot lots, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. A hundred and fifty foot, they were only a hundred and thirty-five feet, but a hundred and fifty foot frontage was all the lots. There was no small lots in this town, frontage.

PY: Were there any regulations in terms of what kinds of plantings you could have, whether you could have grass or lawn or

CH: We had an *Architectural* committee that had to approve on the houses, structure. I don't remember what control we had over any lot. I'm not sure. You know, they were all fine, good people. And they weren't trying to be chintzy. They wanted nice lawn. They wanted flowers on it. I don't think that was ever a serious problem.

MH: I think when you drive around, you see that some of them have kept quite deserty, which is very attractive and the contrast is nice rather than sameness of all of them. I've always enjoyed that at the desert, the contrast we have. And you can't beat the palm trees, though. Originally all of these lots, all the vacant lots, Cliff had put in three palm trees on each corner. Every

corner had palm trees through there. When we lost them, remember you were very exercised about it, that they weren't being watered. And what had happened was when he sold the water company to the Coachella Valley County Water District, they cut off all the water to the trees because the people who owned the lots weren't paying any fees for the water. See, it had all been sort of a wide open thing. If you needed water, why you simply got the water and there wasn't any extra charge for it. Each lot according to the Palm Desert Property Owners Association paid something into the organization. And so the property owners then simply ran that and all the trees were watered. I remember trying to save the three trees on this corner. And unknown to us they had simply cut off the water and cut the pipe, and the trees were dying. We'd been away that summer. I got back and I put a long hose on and I was watering them . . .

TAPE 1, SIDE 2:

CH: What make is this?

PY: This is a . . . Okay. So someone cut the hose on your . . .

MH: Yes, and those poor trees had a terrible time living.

And finally they came along one day, whoever owned the

lot, I don't know whether they ordered it or not, but they didn't want to pay for that little bit of water because they'd have to pay to put a meter on. When the water company bought the old water company, why they put meters on everything. And which seemed an awful shame. It wasn't as though it took that much water. Twice a month was about all they'd need to keep them alive. But they finally removed them. All of these corners had these beautiful trees. That seemed quite a shame. There are still a few remaining. If you drive around you can see some of the vacant lots will have some trees. I hate to see the landmark, the trees, being removed. That's why every time someone calls and says somebody's going to move such and such tree, we get right onto it and try to talk them out of it or at least have them move them. Several people have been just great about moving them and preserving them. As you know, the three trees, large trees, that are just off of El Paseo on Sage were saved by Mr. Dunham. He was building there. And three of them were together and they were three of the oldest trees. So they spotted them around the property. Sometime those should be marked, the background of them. And, of course, the ones now are at

Firecliff, at the Firecliff property. They may have to move them, but they're going to keep them and use them.

PY: Good.

MH: Which I think is great. And that might be interesting perhaps for them to have a plaque stating that. Otherwise those things are forgotten and lost.

PY: I think with some information about Firecliff Lodge, too, and that would be certainly a place for it to be, to say what it was.

MH: Yes, I think so. I hope they're going to also put some shops in here. It makes it more interesting to have some shops alongside of the bank as they've done on one or two of the other sides.

PY: I was curious about the water situation here. What did you find when you . . . I assume that you . . .

CH: Well, it was drilled and formed the water company. Yes.

PY: How far, do you remember, did you have to go very far to find water here?

CH: Oh, I think about two hundred feet.

MH: Six hundred finally, darling

CH: Very deep. But the first well was about two hundred feet. But later, you know, we were using a lot of water. I guess we did go off six hundred.

MH: Yes.

PY: Was that a very difficult part of the development?

CH: Well, when you drill six hundred feet, it's pretty expensive. It was only difficulty in the golf, quite an expenditure.

MH: Well, also I remember that also that the pictures that you have when you first turned on that water jumping for joy because the town wouldn't be here if you hadn't found that water at that time.

CH: It was generally regarded as, you know, never going to get water on this side of the highway. I'd bring in a well, was quite a lot of excitement.

MH: Big celebration.

PY: What gave you the . . . I assume you bought the property and then drilled for the water. What gave you the confidence to go ahead?

CH: Well, he's gone now, there's an old water driller, an oldtimer, he's who I went to. He even located the wells we did drill.

MH: He actually came along with one of those water finders.

CH: Yes.

MH: Those sticks, you know, that you read about and hear about.

CH: I don't know whether it was real

MH: Well, it turns down. It looks almost like a reversed

CH: Used that, yes.

PY: Like a drumstick?

MH: Like a drumstick, yes. And they walked along and it actually goes down.

PY: Who was the man, do you remember his name?

CH: I can get that name at the office, but off the cuff I can't tell you. I just don't remember names.

MH: I told you you used to use the name for years. And I've forgotten now this fellow's name. But he said there would be water there and he was right. But when Patton was here I remember you used to tell me that they had drilled several places but they had never gone deeply.

CH: They went sixty, eighty feet and got no sign of water, so they were hauling in the water tanks from across the highway.

MH: Or from Indio.

CH: Yes.

MH: And they used to take them down there for their shower baths.

CH: Oh, yes.

MH: And so on because there wasn't anything here. And every platform or wherever they were I recall you said you had to dig them all up because they were all in the wrong places.

CH: Yes.

PY: The platforms were in the wrong places.

MH: Yes, they put in these cement bases. I guess, what did they use those for, for tents or what?

CH: Well, I can't tell you.

MH: But most of them had to be dug up. They were just spotted here and there or where they had had equipment, I guess, is what they used them for so they wouldn't get buried in the sand.

PY: But you dug them up because they didn't go with your developments, you say?

CH: Yes, that's right.

MH: Yes.

PY: I thought you meant they were over the wells.

MH: Oh, no! Some of them were perhaps.

CH: No. No. we went deep and we got two or three good wells and in fact, I developed and built the water system to try to supply it. I tried to supply it. I had to record those, have water even to get a licensed subdivision.

You couldn't sell lots until you had water.

PY: What about utilities? Where was that coming from?

CH: Well, the utility company, you had to advance the money. Then you'd get so many houses, two or three customers, they'd come, they'd extend, with any growth, the utility company would, the telephone company and power company would make the powers with X number of new customers.

PY: Coming from Indio?

CH: Well, they'd come right down to the valley

PY: I was just curious if it was the Palm Springs people or Indio people that were servicing this area.

MH: I think it did come from the Palm Springs area. We're still in debt.

CH: Yes, it come from Palm Springs, yes.

MH: We're still serviced by them. Southern California Edison is throughout the valley there.

CH: I'm sure someone at the Edison Company would give you some correct facts on all that.

PY: Well, moving on a bit through changing subjects, when did you then start Desert Beautiful, or what was your concern that started Desert Beautiful?

MH: Oh, that happened after a luncheon. I had been asked by the Women's Club to put on a fashion show. I was trying

to come up with something different and out of the ordinary. So many of the people who were here, lived here, traveled a great deal, especially during the hot months. So I thought, well, Flight into Fashions was the title I came up with. We'd talk about what to wear when you traveled. So I contacted some people who would put on that type of fashion show. And then I thought, Jackie Cochran living here in the valley, that who would know better to speak to us about it, traveled the world many times. And so she was very happy to do it; took little talking to get her to come over. But she said she would. And we had her speak first about what she thought about travel and what to wear and so forth. And then we interspersed the fashions. She got up and she said, "Well, I don't know, wear whatever you want to wear." (laughter) Be comfortable. That's the main part. She said, "What I really want to talk to you women about today, how dirty this desert is." And that's how it really started. She kept saying, "Why there are tin cans, beer cans, bottles, debris all over the place. I fly in and I can see the bottles shining from my airplane." And so I was astounded because I had just gotten married. I was still on my honeymoon as far as

I was concerned. And I hadn't seen anything that looked awful to me. So a day or two later I said to a couple of the women, I said, "Good heavens, I was so shocked at what Jackie Cochran had said, and is the desert that dirty?" And they said, "Oh, yes, it is." And I said, "Well, why doesn't someone do something about it." And then they turned to me and said, "Well, why don't you?" I said, "All right, I will." I had no idea what I was about to do. The next thing I knew I found myself home on the telephone calling up all the Chambers of Commerce and telling them that we were going to form a new organization. And the name just popped out of my head, Desert Beautiful. Of course, there had been Los Angeles Beautiful, and I'd known Valley Knudsen. And I'd done a few things along those lines, but it had never come to me to do anything about it here particularly. So that's how it started. Then I called several people I knew and said, "I'm starting an organization. Do you want to be a part of it?" And we gathered about six or eight of us, and I got hold of Auntie Pearl McManus. And she liked the idea. I told her what my thoughts were. She thought that was wonderful, we should do it. And we decided it would be throughout the entire valley. So

and as we said, we'd gotten in touch with all the Chambers of Commerce. And she gave the first luncheon for us at the tennis club. And that's really how it started. And Lela Thompson was with me at that time, and Ther^{er} Skank was her name. Cliff had had Ther^{er} as a hostess at Shadow Mountain Club. She was a wonderful person, full of ideas, too, and she put on a lot of wonderful parties. And she was a good publicity person and so between Ther^{er} and Lela Thompson and myself and, oh, several others, Auntie Pearl helped a bit with the financing at the beginning. That's how we started. And dues were five dollars, and dues are still five dollars to this day. We've never changed. We work on a very low budget, as low as we can. Unfortunately, our rate trouble is with mailing because it comes so expensive to mail in any volume. I've sat many, many times just simply writing down all the things I thought should be done. And our main thing was to be a pickup, paint up and plant organization. And we've since gone into many different facets. We've worked on blow sand, and we've caused several good ordinances to be passed in all of the cities. The planting parking lots. The main thing I kept saying was blacktop and cement has got

to go. If you're going to put in a service station, you must have at least two planters. Parking lots should all be landscaped. Well, it just grew from that on and on. It's been a lot of fun, and we're in our nineteenth year. I can't believe it. (chuckle) And it seems everyone who ever belonged to Desert Beautiful still belongs to Desert Beautiful. The same with our civic awards. The people who were with us from the very beginning, that was 1962, they're still with us. So it's been a lot of fun. A lot of work, and very interesting.

PY: Do you feel that it's changed the attitude of the members of Desert Beautiful as well as governments in the area?

MH: I think it's made them more aware, yes. There's no question if you keep talking about something long enough, someone's going to pay attention to it. And sometimes you wonder if you have done a good job, and how much of it has mattered. But then people would say, well, if you didn't do it, it could be very bad. So at least you've opened the eyes of people. And also it's been very important our program in the schools where we've had several films that we show in the lower grades. And also high school age. We have the SM poster contests

and we have paper drives, recycling newspapers. And that's still an ongoing thing in our Environmental Recycling Enterprises, that's the name of it, ERE. And that has been going on as long as we have. There's so many things. If we get into that, I might keep you all day and you'll run out of (laughter) tape. But that came a lot later, of course, in Palm Desert. It was necessary, I think, earlier, too, because we weren't all incorporated. There was just Palm Springs and Indio were incorporated. I don't believe, and Coachella. I don't think there were any other cities incorporated. Now, see how many, and Cathedral City is now incorporated.

PY: It's the eighth one now.

MH: I believe so.

CH: That's just an ^{now} ~~an~~ ^{DEEN} accomplishment.

MH: Yes. I have always enjoyed development and planting and beautification. Years ago I lived out in the San Fernando Valley and I saw how poorly that grew. But when I came down here, that was one of the things I'd mentioned to Cliff so many times. I thought, oh, I hope this valley doesn't grow like San Fernando Valley. If they don't keep some open space, keep the houses separated instead of bumper to bumper and the business

places, if they don't have some land on which you can plant and beautify, it's going to be ugly.

CH: San Fernando Valley involves so many, many, many different owners. Each one wanted his own idea and the hell with anybody next door. And here it is, what, today is the answer for that.

MH: Well, of course, the master plan we all worked on so hard and so diligently has been very important to the entire area. I think if it weren't for that we would have grown nilly way. There's no doubt we've grown with beauty and with care and good thought. And fortunately, the people who have become council people, they've done their very best to keep those points in view. So therefore some of the things that Cliff started, you know, Cliff had entrance to Palm Desert, the beautiful Palo Verde tree. We've never had anything as lovely since. There's a little bit of log, some rock formation and some desert planting. We have those pictures somewhere, too, and it's just a very simple, small sign saying Palm Desert. So that gave me the idea to have what we call the Palm Desert Mark and we did have a very beautiful one. It has been changed since, but they intend to improve this last one which no one seems to be

too satisfied with. But those are the things that happen. Ever changing. You wonder sometimes if the change is for the good or for the better or the worse or what. (chuckle) But all in all I can say I think given a good start Palm Desert has really blossomed in a beautiful way and it is improving right along. But you have to get there early when something is going to be done so that you can have some input.

PY: Do you feel that, how to put it, the situation that existed here originally when you started Palm Desert community, the kinds of feelings about the area, the friendships which occurred, and the fun the people had here, do you feel that that has influenced what the community is today? Is any of that still a basic part, a fundamental part of the area? Has that grown? How has the community changed, or is it the same?

CH: What's your reaction on that, darling?

MH: Well, of course, you've been here longer than I have.
(chuckle) But I . . .

CH: Well, we had some other grand ideas to begin with. We exposed those to a large degree right on down that same avenue. But it hasn't happened rapidly. It's been very gradual. We made a lot of the right decisions. A few things I'm not a bit proud of, but all in all I think

it's been a better than average program.

MH: I think the feeling was certainly a closeness. Everybody knew everybody, but that's true in every small town. And there isn't a lot of friendliness and the post offices because there were how many, three, at least or four, the post office grew and grew. And that was always the place to meet. I remember when we were first approached to have a mailbox outside of the house and we'd meet anyone, many people would say, oh, don't get one because then you won't be coming to the post office anymore. Then we won't see you and how will we meet, and that was very important. That used to be half of the fun is going to the post office, meeting people. I think that was true of Firecliff.

CH: Yes.

MH: And Shadow Mountain, too. But those were really the places to meet people and pass the time of day. And, of course, a lot of that has changed because it has grown so. There's so many more people. A few times now we do go into restaurants right here in Palm Desert and we look around and we don't recognize anyone in the room. Now before it was hello and hello and hello, you know. But then when you do go to some of the clubs, why there

are some of the older people that we knew way back. That's fun always to know them, but they have, they've spread out throughout the valley. They're not all centered in Palm Desert. Some have moved to Indian Wells which used to be Palm Desert. All of this and Rancho Mirage, it sort of was all one. And now there is a little separation. I think that's the real change is the fact that you don't meet as many of the people you used to know because you don't go to the same places anymore. There's so many other places to go.

PY: Do you think there is a unification, though, of this community? Do you have a sense of community . . .

MH: Oh, I think definitely so. I think it's getting that way. At first when any city is incorporated, there's a little bit of a feeling of separation. And there's always a lot of criticism; no matter what decisions are made, there's going to be some criticism. And nothing ever seems to be exactly right. But then little by little, as it begins to be noticed, then you realize that the steps are going still in the right direction. And more satisfaction comes out of it. You don't hear of many complaints. So there's definitely a strong feeling, I think, in all of the communities because I'm

so involved in it towards beautification. You point to Indio, see what they have done. On Oasis Street is a for instance, and that was a big undertaking to have that divider down the center of Oasis. I think it's a feather in their cap. (chuckle) So to speak. And Indio, I think, wants to develop and have a little bit of the resort development in their town, other than being more of an . . .

CH: Agriculture town.

MH: Agriculture town as it has always been. So the whole valley, I think, is growing into one great big beautiful garden. No question about that.

PY: How did you all feel about incorporation proceedings for the area in terms of incorporating the Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage initially, and then singly after that?

CH: Well, you have some certain people in, well, for example, that kind of back off. Palm Desert tried to include them. I don't think you can stop that. You're going to have several different incorporations. I think down the road *Just make it the other way* why don't we merge this thing, about three of these incorporations and have one incorporation. And one board of directors was one or two from these different areas. I think that's going to be the

next progressive step, but I don't think you can stop individual incorporation now. You can't. They wanted to get organized.

PY: How did you feel about it at the time that incorporation first came up for Palm Desert?

CH: Well, I felt all along that the time was going to come when we had to incorporate. I didn't know just when the time was going to be ripe, but from the beginning I've felt certain that incorporation must come fairly soon down the road.

PY: With these other communities, or alone?

CH: Well, one or two or three hadn't even started it at the time I was doing that kind of thinking. You have one or two rather ambitious, active leaders and you're going to try to drag them in, may get a lot of resistance. When we incorporate three or four or so, came in, let's get smart and tie all this together in one incorporation, one city all, and one city council. I think that will be the next logical move and will come on its own. When it's ripe for that, I think it will come.

MH: It would make good sense, I suppose. And the matter of administering the whole area because there's so much likeness about it all.

CH: Yadie, boy.

MH: That's down the road a long way from . . .

PY: Yes. Someone had asked me recently, and I feel you may be the person that can answer this, why along 111 the only place that it has such a huge easement because of the frontage roads is in Palm Desert. It's so wide. Why did that occur, do you know?

CH: Why 111 is so wide in Palm Desert?

PY: Only right in this specific area.

CH: Well, I wish I could answer that. It's just kind of one of those things that happened by accident, I think. But again, things are going to tie these things together into one incorporation. In fact, one crew, one step. It can do it so much, it's such an economy to have it done, tied together.

MH: Perhaps having the police force together, the fire departments coordinated and I think we have to come to something to do with this street cleanup. It should take place and should be an ongoing thing. It's so spotty that you really don't have a good accomplishment. Actually, I look back on when the county was doing all of it, and I think we were much better off in that instance because they did an excellent job. Because they had the equipment, they

had the manpower. Now it's very spotty that each community has to hire someone to do it separately, and it's not an ongoing thing. And the only way you keep things clean, as we all know, is for it to be ongoing. It has to be like good housekeeping. You can't do it today and leave it for three weeks and then do it. So it's the same thing with the city. Although I think there has been an improvement. I've noticed after these couple of small rains we've had, they've had some work done almost immediately in cleaning any of the sand that has piled up off the streets. So it's a learning process, and it is improving. With the highway, you're meaning because of having the service roads, as we have termed them, I think the time has come where they should call them South Palm Desert Drive and North Palm Desert Drive. In fact, there are a couple of signs that says Palm Desert Drive. And I think there's one or two of them I have seen. And instead of calling them frontage roads, it would make it far more attractive to call them North Palm Desert Drive and South Palm Desert Drive. They were there, came about because of when they put through the highway on both sides, remember the scooped out areas.

CH: Raised the highway.

MH: And they raised the highway with that dirt that was taken out of the sides.

CH: And left a pit on one side.

MH: Yes. So then those little shops just grew in there.

People were anxious to have the services, and the services were anxious to come in for the people who were moving to the area. So it grew up in that manner. One time the Road Department, the State Highway, wanted to fence that area and make Highway 111 an expressway. And that was, I remember we had started Desert Beautiful at that time (chuckle) and that was a big uproar. If there was anything I personally disliked, it was just the fencing. It was so unattractive. And then certain streets you wouldn't be able to get onto the highway and it sounded awful. But that got taken care of pretty fast when they saw the reaction of the people.

CH: When they saw it. That program was stopped pretty quickly.

MH: Yes. But the shops were coming in so fast that there was no way to treat that street any differently. And the highway is practically the highway itself with the divider in the center is about the same size as the rest of the highway. If you notice as you go into Indian Wells and go out towards Rancho Mirage now, it widens in spots.

Eventually I think as new development goes in in those vacant areas, they will have an evenness off the highway then. And, of course, we're interested in beautifying those sections. And hopefully that will take place at one time. It was done in about three blocks, and then the storms we had in 1976 didn't do it very much good. But I think it will be a very attractive Highway 111. Getting back to Desert Beautiful, which we really didn't mean to talk about. (laughter) I thought we were going to talk mainly about Shadow Mountain and the early times of the town. But we started a program of planting palms from the mountains to the sea, continuing the planting that was done in Palm Springs by Ruth Hardy when she was a councilwoman. She had a great deal of foresight and really I don't know what Palm Canyon Drive would be if it hadn't been for those palm trees. It really makes it Palm Springs. So I went to her and discussed it with her, and told her I thought that would be great to carry that all the way down to the Salton Sea and Highway 111. Of course, she loved the idea. So we made her the honorary chairman of it. And little by little, as development goes in, we write them letters and go to them personally and talk to them. And we asked them if they wouldn't put in

palm trees so we'd have the palm trees from the mountains to the sea all along Highway 111. Many of the trees in Rancho Mirage were done by the Desert Beautiful organization. Millard Wright donated many of those trees. Also Wheeler's Nursery. So that's how that has taken place.

PY: Oh, I think that's very important. It's fascinating.

MH: Well, that's why we're working now to continue that through Palm Desert, so it won't have that barren look. It looks like just an empty highway. And with some beautification in the center *median* would make a great deal of difference. I think beautification also helps to slow traffic. So it will make the community have a nicer approach as you come into the area. And Rancho Mirage is very interested in doing that, too.

PY: Did we cover the early days or was there some other things you wanted to talk about?

CH: What?

PY: Did we cover the early days, or were there other things that you wanted to talk about? I was kind of curious, when you would come out here, I assume you were living in Hollywood at the time, when you would come here, what would your feelings be about approaching the area? Was it . . .

MH: Well, I'll have to confess to you that I'd been coming to

the desert many, many years, back in the thirties. I had a brother . . .

CH: Before she ever met me.

PY: (laughter)

MH: Named Tony, and he fell in love with the desert. And we were practically inseparable, did everything together. We used to come down here and he hunted rattlesnakes. And many is the time I entertained rattlesnake for him while he ran back to the car to get his gun. And he used to make ties, neckties and belts which sold. And that's how he was making his fortune at the time.

CH: Rattlesnake skins.

MH: Rattlesnake skins. He was quite expert at it. He was quite artistic. And so later on, when I went into, had my career in the picture business, the studio used to give me a three-week vacation as a bonus. And my choice was always to come to the El Mirador Hotel in Palm Springs. And in those days, back then, there wasn't anything there but the El Mirador, the Desert Inn, some little place, I don't know whether it was called *In El Panto* or, and a little two-story Spanish house there. And I was horse crazy so I always had a horse was brought (laughter) to the door practically at the El Mirador. And I used to

ride down Indian Avenue. And then we used to climb up, go up into, from Idyllwild, all the way up the back way up to where the Tramway is now, which was always the place to go because it was such a fantastic view. And it's so interesting that Francis Crocker who was one of the fathers of the Tramway, along with Earl Kauffman, found that particular spot where I remember, still in junior high school in those days, used to ride horseback all the way up there just to see that view. But now we can go up in the Tramway in no time at all. It used to take us about four hours on horseback from the other side.

PY: The things you do. (laughter)

MH: So that's my background in Palm Springs. I used to play a lot of tennis, too. And go to the Racket Club, Charlie Farrell's. That was the beginning of that back then.

PY: Did this meet your expectations of what that had been. I mean, Palm Springs was known for those kinds of clubs and hotels.

MH: Well, frankly, when I saw Palm Desert, I thought it was going to be a long time before it looked like anything. It was really barren. Aside from the trees on El Paseo and the trees around Shadow Mountain and later at Firecliff,

there wasn't anything here. And it had a long way to go, I thought. But it certainly did it in a hurry.

CH: Nothing plus nothing doesn't add up to much.

MH: (laughter)

PY: I think there was a lot of friendship and good times here, though, at this point, maybe so barrenness.

MH: That's true. It certainly is beautiful now. I think when you do drive through and you come into the Palm Desert area, you realize it is beautiful. It is more beautiful than most other spots. I think they're all developing and they're all going to be attractive. To me, the whole valley is a garden. And when you go down into the lower valley at the agriculture, there's nothing more beautiful than those fields full of beautiful vegetables. We often drive that way, and always go in the side ways so that you can see it. And that's really worth the trip. I think we're quite pleased and very happy. I wouldn't live anywhere else in the world.

(Loud coughing) Would you, Cliff?

CH: What?

MH: Would you live anywhere else in the world?

CH: No, I wouldn't.

MH: This is the place.

CH: We like to travel to some other parts of the world, but hurry back.

PY: Did Edgar Bergen and Hopalong Cassidy tend to draw people here at all?

MH: Oh, I'm sure they did.

CH: Yes.

MH: They were really more quiet. Edgar Bergen said to me, "I don't know, Marian, why I just didn't buy more property. Cliff kept telling me to." And he said, "And I even sold my ranch." And he said, "I don't know why I did that." (laughter) And, of course, Hopalong, old Bill Boyd whom I knew when I was living in Chatsworth, he used to come to my place there, my ranch. He was married to Grace Bradley whom I had know_o in the picture business. So we were naturally drawn together. And there were a lot of motion picture stars living out in the valley in those days. Janet Gaynor and Jackie, Jack Oakey and Barbara Stanwyck and Bob Taylor, all had homes in the area. Luella Parsons, so many famous people. And then I was surprised when I came here to discover that Bill had, and Grace had bought a home here. And they loved it. Bill said it was the best thing that he had ever done.

CH: Bill who?

MH: Bill Boyd.

CH: Oh, yes.

MH: Cliff used to have him for a lot of affairs. And he came to several things we did here. He was a charmer and she was beautiful.

PY: Quite true.

MH: Yes. And we used to meet at the post office and have long, long talks about all kinds of things because I knew the time when he decided to do the Hopalong Cassidy pictures, I knew the producer. He used to come out to the house quite often. And Bill called one day and said, "Do you know so and so. He's a funny little guy and so forth, and he wants me to do these Hopalong Cassidy pictures, and what do you think?" And I told him . . . I'll get it, darling. How great I thought it would be if he did. (phone ringing) (dog barks loudly) Well.

PY: I'll trade you places.

MH: All right. I was saying, if I could remember all the names of people. Cliff has more than half forgotten them. Unless you are dealing with them right along, names do leave you. But Cliff had so many famous people here. In the sports world. I think that was so interesting because he had great sports events taking place.

CH: Famous names in aviation.

MH: And aviation people and who came here and then stayed here. I know Mr. McCullough did El Dorado, said to me one time, he said, "You know, I'd never have gone down the road and thought about El Dorado and anything of that kind if it hadn't been for what Cliff Henderson did here in Palm Desert." He said, "I couldn't believe it when I saw the development here," because he used to fly in, in this area from time.

PY: Did he fly in Desert Aire?

MH: Yes, Desert Aire used to be the place to come in. I remember the last time we saw anyone take off from that field, it was just about one of the last people, was Barry Goldwater. He had been down here and I remember we worried about him taking off because it was on grass. And it had been damp the day before, so it slowed the plane. And we really worried until he got that, he was flying a Mustang, wasn't he?

CH: Yes.

MH: And it was a little bit of a heavy ship to take up. But he made it, thank goodness. (chuckle) And we talked about it later and he said he was worried, too. I was sorry to see that go. That used to be fun to go over

there to Desert Aire and sit and watch all those planes come in. And Hank Gogerty, of course, calls us every so often. He lives in town. There were many people that sometime we should open up your files and go through and come up with all those names.

CH: Yes.

MH: And, of course, Frank Morgan was here frequently. And Walter Pidgeon used to spend a great deal of time here. I just can't come up with all the names, but I know when I first started coming here to Palm Desert . . .

CH: Edgar Bergen, of course.

MH: Yes. It was, well, I think the desert has proven that, that famous people, all the famous people in the world seem to come here at some time or another. It's like Marrekegh in Africa.

CH: Yes.

MH: That was Churchill's place to come. And during the war, Cliff was, you were stationed at Dakar for a time. He was a commissioner at Dakar.

CH: *Government* commission at Dakar.

MH: So in one of our travels Cliff took me to Marrekech because he said this reminded him so much of Marrekech when he saw this. And it's amazing how the mountains,

especially the snow-capped today, looks like the Atlas Mountains in that part of the world. And so Cliff said he had just fallen in love with that place, and then when he saw this he just knew that this was the place. And he could visualize that it could be another great resort and a wonderful place to come for your health, which it certainly has proven to be for many, many people.

PY: It's been a draw for a long time for the valley.

MH: Yes. Absolutely.

CH: Yadey boy.

MH: You'll break the thing. (chuckle)

CH: Oh, yes.

PY: It will be on there.

CH: It will be on there, yes.

PY: Anything else that you can think of?

MH: Well, really, I can't. Pat, it's been fun talking with you.

CH: Come, Yadey boy.

MH: And . . .

PY: What was one of the highlights of Palm Desert?

MH: The players. They had people from all over the valley, thanks to Lela Thompson, who could dig them out from

everywhere. And if Lela Thompson got on the phone and talked to them, she could talk anyone into doing anything that she wanted. And they'd all flock to put on amateur nights. She always called it amateur night.

END OF INTERVIEW